



Commonwealth of Kentucky Labor Cabinet

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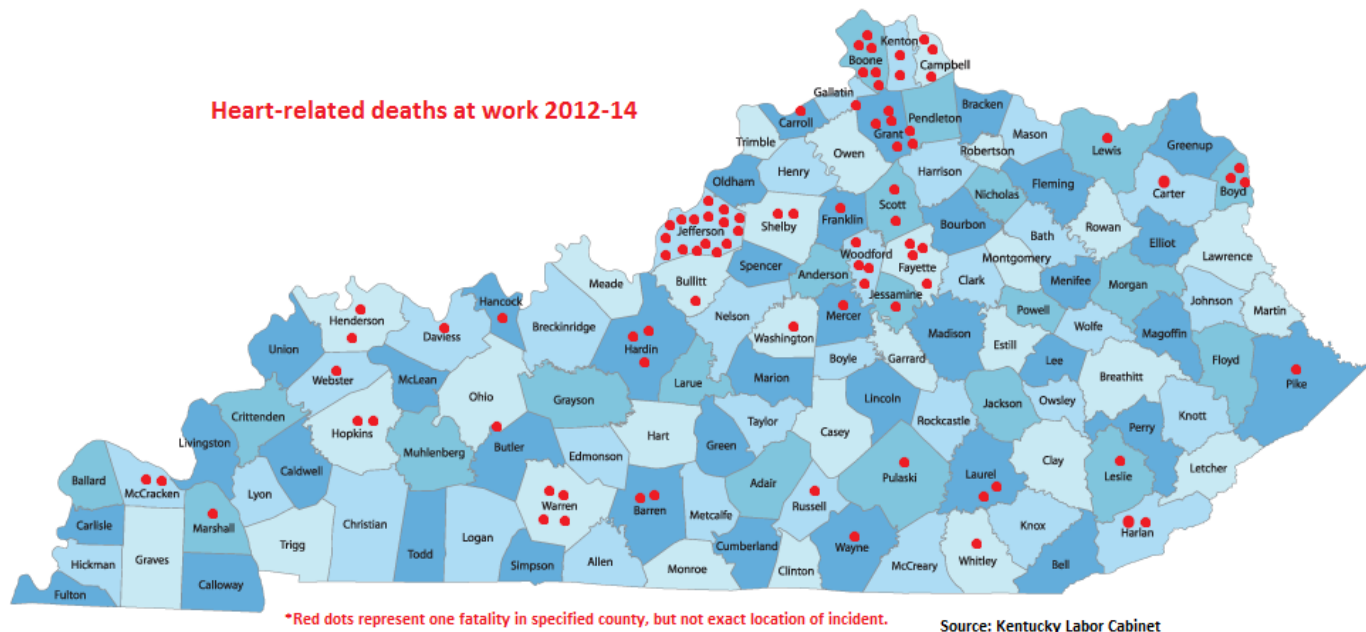
The Top Killer of People at Work in Kentucky: The Heart Attack *Heart-related fatalities outnumber all other causes of workplace deaths*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 8, 2015) – In keeping with its mission to protect workers in the Commonwealth, the Kentucky Labor Cabinet examined the causes of worker fatalities each year in Kentucky from 2012-14, and found the heart attack was the overwhelming number one cause of death at work.

“It’s especially important to consider the health and wellness of the most significant driving force of our economy – the workers of Kentucky,” said Kentucky Labor Cabinet Secretary Larry L. Roberts. “Employers should do everything they can to raise awareness about cardiovascular health, and everyone needs to keep an eye on their blood pressure and cholesterol levels while paying close attention to diet and exercise.”

In the three years of 2012-14, 87 Kentuckians suffered fatal heart attacks while on the job. In that same time period, there were eight other deaths from natural causes, such as pancreas failure, stroke and brain aneurism. As for work-related fatalities, 28 resulted from being struck by an object, 19 from falls, 17 from transportation crashes, 13 from being caught in or between objects, seven from electrocution, and one each from hyperthermia and suffocation.

The victims of heart-related workplace deaths had an average age of 53 years old. Of the 87 heart-related deaths, 10 were truck drivers. The truck driver was the most likely occupation in Kentucky to have a heart attack on the job, while machine operator (seven) and maintenance worker (six) rounded out the top three.



The deaths included in this study fall under the jurisdiction of the Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health (Kentucky OSH) Program, and do not include fatalities under federal agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration or the Federal Railroad Administration.

kyhealthnow

Gov. Steve Beshear launched [kyhealthnow](#) last year as an aggressive and wide-ranging initiative to reduce incidents and deaths from Kentucky's dismal health rankings and habits. It builds on Kentucky's successful implementation of health care reform and uses multiple strategies over the next several years to improve the state's collective health.

One of the goals of kyhealthnow is to reduce cardiovascular deaths in Kentucky 10 percent by 2019. With more than 12,000 deaths per year, Kentucky ranks 48 in the nation in cardiovascular deaths. Some of Gov. Beshear's strategies for reducing heart-related deaths include the following:

- Increase by 25 percent the proportion of adults receiving aspirin therapy in accordance with evidence-based guidelines.
- Increase the percentage of individuals receiving evidence-based smoking cessation treatment by 50 percent.

- Support the ongoing efforts of the Kentucky CARE Collaborative, a statewide effort designed to provide blood pressure awareness education within communities.
- Continue efforts to lower sodium intake in government-regulated facilities, given the link between sodium intake and cardiovascular disease.
- Continue support for efforts of the Stroke Encounter Quality Improvement Project, a statewide voluntary initiative among hospitals to implement evidence-based integrated cardiovascular health systems in Kentucky.

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The Kentucky Labor Cabinet's primary responsibility is to ensure that divisions and offices falling under the auspices of the Cabinet work within the jurisdiction of Kentucky labor law to ensure equitable and fair treatment of the Commonwealth's nearly 1.9 million wage-earning employees. The Cabinet, according to regulation, has the duties, responsibilities, power, and authority relating to labor, wage and hour issues, occupational safety and health of employees, child labor, apprenticeship, workers' compensation insurance, and all other matters under the jurisdiction of the Labor Cabinet. For more information, visit www.labor.ky.gov/.

